

Message Text

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61

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6917

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BL

SUBJ: DEATH OF ARMY CONSCRIPTS CAUSES PROTEST

1. ON JUNE 6 MINERS OF CATAVI AND SIGLO XX AND STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN ANDRES OF LA PAZ DECLARED A 48 HOUR STRIKE SEEKING CLARIFICATION OF THE DEATHS OF NINE RECRUITS ON MAY 31. THE MINERS FEDERATION ALSO ISSUED A STATEMENT CALLING FOR A FULL INVESTIGATION OF THE MATTER AND FACTORY WORKERS AT THE MANACO PLANT IN COCHABAMBA DECLARED A STATE OF ALERT IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRIKERS. MINERS' DEMANDS INCLUDE A REQUEST THAT TROOPS STATIONED IN THE MINING AREAS BE WITHDRAWN.

2. THE BOLIVIAN ARMY UPON ANNOUNCING THE DEATH OF THE RECRUITS EXPLAINED THAT THEY HAD DIED IN A SWIMMING ACCIDENT IN A THERMAL BATH IN UNCIA. HOWEVER, THERE HAVE BEEN SCATTERED ALLEGATIONS THAT THE CADAVERS OF THE RECRUITS HAD BROKEN BONES AND THAT THEY MAY HAVE DIED OF CAUSES OTHER THAN DROWNING. PRESENCIA OF JUNE 7 REPORTED THAT THE BODIES OF FIVE OF THE DEAD RECRUITS HAD BEEN STOLEN BY RESIDENTS OF UNCIA FOR A FUNERAL SERVICE AT WHICH MINE LEADERS SPOKE.

3. SECURITY FORCES IN THE MINE AREAS NEAR UNCIA ARE ON ALERT.

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THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE IN THE AREA TO WHAT THEY VIEW

AS NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE ARMY HAS BEEN STRONG AND
WILL BE FANNED BY ENEMIES OF THE REGIME. NEVERTHELESS, THE
GOB IS IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION, AND IT IS PROBABLE THAT
PROTEST WILL DIE DOWN IN THE COMING DAYS UNLESS EVIDENCE OF
ACTUAL NEGLECT ON THE PART OF THE ARMY IS DEMONSTRATED.

4. DAO CHECKING SOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.
STEDMAN

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